Short Study 021: The Fully-clothed Christian

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Read Col 3:9-14.

There is no distinctive item of clothing, such as a turban or a burka, to identify a Christian. How, then, are believers to be recognised? The Apostle Paul tells us how: to dress in the "clothes" of character and behaviour. The word "dress" is not inappropriate, for the words "put on", in the original language, meant just that. The Greek verb is *enduo*, such as might have been used by a First Century Greek speaker to refer to getting dressed. (It is also the word from which we get the English word "endue".)

1. First there is something to be put *off*. What it is (verse 9)? The old nature that one had before Christ came into one's life is no longer fit "clothing" for the Christian. Read more about this old nature in Rom 6:6 and Eph 4:22.

2. Put on something more appropriate. Paul lists seven "items of clothing", or characteristics, that should be seen on every Christian. They are (in the NKJV version):

    Tender mercies. (Heart-felt compassion.)
    Kindness.
    Humility. (Read 1 Pet 5:5.)
    Meekness. (Gentleness.)
    Longsuffering.
    Forgiveness.
    Love.

Which of these are listed as Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)? What does that tell us about how we are to get such "clothing"?

Why not copy out this list and display it where it can be seen wherever you dress in the mornings? It will remind you to put on that day more than your material clothes!

To think about:

Try to be conscious of showing these characteristics as you interact with others throughout the day, asking the Holy Spirit to help you.

To dig deeper:

1. Draw three columns on a sheet of paper. In the first column, make a list of the seven characteristics in Col 3:10-14.Turn to Eph 4:22 – 5:2 and make a second list – noting which characteristics are repeated. Do the same in the third column, using 2 Peter 1:5-7.

2. Using chain references from your Bible, or a concordance, see what light other passages shine of each of the seven words in Colossians 3 listed above.